
ARABY THE BLEST.

I.

IT was known afar off as the water boat by the oddity of its sail. Even those people whose untrained eyes noted no differences of line and rigging, to whom the cut of the jib was a metaphor pure and simple, could not miss the contrast between a faded blue sail and a shining white one. There was something primitive and idyllic in its errand that appealed to the imagination, and something humanitarian that allied it to the moral meanings of the universe. Whether it slipped about from yacht to trading schooner or sloop in the early morning, before the movement of life had fairly begun, cleaving the quiet waters with their broken reflections of the dawn, or threaded its way at evening through the array of anchored boats, beginning to

hang out a light, here and there, in that moment which "calls the glory from the gray," there was in its gentle passage a hint of something harmonious as Nature herself.

In the bow, her elbows on her knees, her chin on her hands, sat Araby, daughter of old Captain Kellaway, for whom the open sea had at last grown too rough, and who, driven to plying a peaceful trade, had found a singularly congenial one as water carrier. Not much moved by the spectacle of the silver and rose of the evening hour, which shed magic upon the harbor and tenderly suffused the whole atmosphere with unreality, the quick, gray eyes of the girl glanced from a heavy dory pulled by a taciturn oarsman to the luxurious dignity of a graceful yacht floating to her anchorage. She nodded now and then in more or less

indifferent greeting, without raising her head, and as the sunset gun sounded near at hand, her gaze followed the dropping of the colors in front of the clubhouse, and then again wandered idly from lantern to lantern, the lights of which flashed superfluously in the radiant glow.

"Late, ain't you, to-night, cap'n?" called out one of the crew of a weather-beaten schooner, on board of which barrels and boxes and drying linen spoke of the pursuit of the useful rather than the beautiful.

"'Bout as late as common," answered the active old man, steadying his craft for the transfer from one hogshead to another. Two other men laid aside their belated labor to lean on the rail and look down into the boat.

"How are you, Araby?" they called in their turn. "Business pretty good at the bar?"

"So so," replied Araby composedly.

"Have a banana?" asked one of the men. The girl's interest in the situation grew more vivid. For answer, she straightened herself, held out her hands and deftly caught the fruit that the sailor tossed into them.

"Thank you," she nodded, and began peeling off the yellow skin.

"Why don't you wind up your dad earlier in the day, Araby?" asked the first speaker. "Then he'd begin to start up his works and run round kinder betimes." The man had an eye for resemblances: there was an unmistakable likeness to a mechanical toy in the movements of the thin, hardy old man. Araby saw it and laughed, and Kellaway's own faded eyes twinkled within their creased and tanned casements.

"You don't even need dusting off to run all around him, do you dad?" she said. "He only gets round to looking out for you once in twenty-four hours; if you should get here sooner, it would put him all out of breath."

The heavy, short-winded man, who was not as quick on his feet as he had been

once, unresentfully pulled a banana off the bunch.

"Have another," he sang out, as the boat swung off. With the acquisitiveness of the squirrel, the girl caught this one as she had the other, and tucked it under the seat of the boat, which wended its slow way with drooping sail to a taut little knockabout lying to starboard.

"You be a reg'lar catch-all for anything there is to eat," said her father not unenviously. "If it ain't black-jack it's bananas."

Aboard the knockabout were two young fellows, one of whom, fair and broad, sat awkwardly in the stern, and, saying nothing as the boat approached, flushed ruddily through his tan. The other, darker, more active, stood in the bow, balancing himself with a slight rocking motion which tipped the craft from one side to the other.

"Hullo, Araby!" he called out.

"Hullo, Hal!" she responded. "Did you get any fish with that party you took out?" and she looked up into his face with frank interest, while the slow hazel eyes of the boy in the stern watched her every gesture with unwavering attention.

"Goin' to stay aboard to-night, ain't you, Hal?" asked Captain Kellaway.

"Yes, and want some water, cap," answered the young skipper. "Fish? no," he went on, turning to Araby again. "They did n't really go to fish, you know. They talk and laugh too much to do anything else."

"Friends of yours from Boston, were n't they?" queried the girl, as she dropped the banana skin into the water.

"Yes, friends of mine," laughed the boy, "from Boston."

"Did you take Steve along?" she asked, with a side glance at the silent figure in the stern. "Hold on, father," and she caught the gunwale of the other boat, as her father sheered off.

"I dunno as I came out this evening to give you sassiety," observed the cap-

tain mildly. At the sudden reference to him, Steve moved a little uneasily, but kept his eyes on her face.

"Oh yes, I took Steve. Any objections, missy?"

"Oh no, only I suppose he did most of the talking," she answered. "He's such a hand to carry on," and she broke off into laughter. Steve flushed deeper, his eyelids drooped in embarrassment, and he looked helplessly away, and helplessly back again to her face.

"You ought to have seen him with one of those girls this afternoon," said his friend, good-naturedly coming to his assistance, and being rewarded with a glance of smothered resentment from his beneficiary.

"Seen him!" exclaimed Araby. "I can see him any time. What I want to know is did she hear him!" The boat moved off so that it brought her abreast of the silent boy. She leaned over toward him, and flicked a bit of salt water in his face. "Did you say anything to her, Steve?" she demanded, with a coquetry the impertinence did not disguise.

"No," said the boy stolidly, while the drops of salt water rolled down his face unheeded.

"I thought so," she laughed. "Good-night, Hal."

"Steve's a good boy," said Captain Kellaway with justice, as the sail filled gently. "You keep sharpin' on him,—just because he ain't like you and some other folks,—all there is of 'em in your ears."

The headlands out toward the open sea no longer detached themselves exquisitely clear from the sky behind them; they had melted with it into a blue mistiness. An indescribable softness lay upon the rippling harbor, permeating the air and water alike, while the lights of the town sprang swiftly to join themselves to the twinkling line that defined it. There was just light enough to guide the water boat along its well-known de-

vious course. Somebody on one of the long, slender, white and shining yachts struck a match as he stood by the rail. Araby looked up quickly; she had been gazing out to sea trying to discern just where the cloudy shape of Wreck Island lost itself in the night. She saw the smoker turn to speak to a woman seated near him on the cushions, and caught her profile as it was lifted in reply. Then she came nearer as they rounded the stern, and the man looking down raised his cap.

"Good-evening, Araby," he said. "How are you, captain?"

"Fair to middlin', Cap'n Carwood," answered the old man. "Thought I heard you was back again 'n these latitudes—you and the Mildew," and he glanced with the eye of a connoisseur at the familiar lines of the graceful craft. Araby looked from the owner of the boat to his smiling guest, at whom she smiled in return, while she rapidly and undisguisedly scanned her face and figure.

"And you, Araby," said Carwood, as the slow, almost imperceptible motion of the smaller boat brought her quietly through the water, "you—you have n't grown since I saw you last; that is n't what they say to you now, is it? What is it they say to you now?" he asked laughing down into the eyes which laughed fearlessly back.

"I don't have to tell them what to say anyhow, Mr. Carwood." She tossed her response to him, gayly and insouciantly, as though there had been no graceful, possibly critical companion listening to the colloquy.

"I'll warrant she does n't, captain," called out the young man, still laughing. The mechanical toy wagged its head after the manner of accomplished mechanical toys.

"It's me as has to tell her what not to say," it responded, and pointed the water boat toward the shore. Araby looked back, and nodded and waved her hand in farewell; the man raised his cap again, and turned to his companion.

"What a pretty girl!" exclaimed Miss Deering. "She is charming."

"Yes, Araby is pretty," he assented absently, his eyes fixed on the face before him. "I've seen her grow up from a peculiarly irresponsible infancy. She is the daughter of old Kellaway, the water boatman. All the harbor is on terms of almost affectionate friendship with them both."

"The water boatman?" and Miss Deering turned to follow with her eyes the sturdy little craft.

"Yes. It supplies the yachts and so on with fresh water when they want it."

"How picturesque! And what a pretty girl," she repeated. "But what is her real name?"

"Araby."

"Araby? How absurd—not to say inappropriate. Why Araby, pray?"

"Local tradition asserts that her mother was less lettered than devout, and upon hearing an itinerant preacher refer to Araby the Blest, took it to be a particularly successful saint, and named her daughter for her forthwith. As Captain Kellaway has never been known to refute it, I fancy local tradition is in the right."

"How delightful!" Miss Deering was given to exclamation of an unemotional sort. "Though of course she ought to be Hebe. What a Hebe she would make, standing in the prow!"

"I fear Araby's really extensive nautical knowledge would fall short of a prow."

"In the prow, raising a crystal beaker. That curly hair blown back, those laughing eyes challenging;" she paused and settled herself again among the cushions.

"Yes, but that is not the way one is offered the wine of life," he sighed, seating himself beside her.

"Certainly not wine," she answered. "Cold water is at once more hygienic and more grateful." There was no evasion in her smile.

"More hygienic, I grant you, since you choose the metaphor of pathology, but not more grateful. Unfortunately, I prefer champagne."

She shrugged her shoulders and tucked a cushion under her graceful head.

"Your kind always does," she assented tolerantly. "Unless sometimes you cry for cold water from very ennui—and then, I will say, you are apt to be sorry afterwards." He caught her hand and kissed it.

"Don't be so trying, Agatha," he said petulantly.

"Don't be so impulsive," she rejoined withdrawing her hand. "I suppose at least the harbor has the grace to call it the Hebe," she went on.

"It?"

"The water boat."

"The harbor is not peopled with classical allusions," he replied.

"Speaking of names," she added with mild curiosity, "whatever made you give your boat such an absurd one, Mildew?"

"Her name was Mildred," he affirmed without false shame. "And I wanted to name it after her. She was older than I, and she laughed and said she thought Mildew would be quite as pretty and not so conspicuous. She was a scoffer, too," he declared, meditatively knocking the ash off his cigar, and turning to regard his companion more closely. "My lot has been cast among scoffers. I have at least learned not to kick against the pricks."

"It is really not a bad name," she said. "It is rather pretty, when you come to think of it."

"So I thought," he agreed. "She added that if not briny, it was at least damp, and quite as good on the face of it as 'Curlew,' which belongs to the accepted. It was a catboat then," he subjoined. "But I've passed the name along."

"Whereby there is a lesson," she began with languidly raised eyebrows.

"Don't draw it," he interrupted. "You never yet learned one correctly. Look over your shoulder at the moon."

Araby pulled her father ashore in the dory from the moorings of the water boat, and sprang lightly to the dock, after his more deliberate landing. As she was making fast, she paused a moment and looked across through the shadows to the graceful white yacht with its brilliant electric lights — she could almost distinguish the figures in the stern. Then she finished her knot with a jerk, and with her father went on along the queer little tortuous streets to their home, stopping now and then to exchange greetings with their contemporaries, who for the most part saw less of life and society than Araby and her father.

II.

"Well, there's war declared," said an aged seaman of meditative action, whose eyes were shafts of light peeping through the crevices of shaggy brows and wrinkled cheeks and temples. He sat in the sun, an upturned dory shielding him from the wind, which had a slight chill this morning.

"They've really done it, have they?" commented Captain Hanson, a large, round, red-faced sailor, with clumsy-looking fat fingers which could make you a delicate piece of mechanism with a jackknife and a shingle.

"They had to," definitely announced a third member of the group on the sunny side of the dory. "They's times, what with flappin' of the riggin' and strainin' of the sheets and general creakin', the man at the wheel's got to slue her round, though it ain't altogether the way she's p'inted."

"The boys are all kinder crazy to go," suggested the business man of the community. He kept the store around the corner, having late in life abandoned nautical for civic enterprises, on account of

inherited responsibilities. Consequently his social pleasures were limited by the exigencies of trade. Just at this hour business was slack, and Tippett's stout, shapeless little daughter could mind the shop. "I saw Steve this morning," he continued, "and he can hardly wait to get off to the battlefield."

"Course they are crazy to go," said Captain Apelby with modified impatience. "Battlefield! They don't remember no better. It's just a fight to them," he went on, "and I would n't risk boys hearing of a fight in kingdom come,—not if I was arrangin' a peace procession, I would n't."

"I guess it's something beside plain fight this time," said Captain Kellaway, who had slowly approached and taken his seat on one of the unpicturesque chairs which stood about every sunny day in this otherwise empty space, bordered on one side by the rambling village street, on the other by the harbor itself. It was the Rialto of the town, and thither drifted, day after day, the seasoned old salts, the somewhat weary old men to whom not much was left but observation and philosophy; but, be it said, an observation quickened by a life in which carelessness meant misadventure and stupidity disaster. The younger men stopped there now and then, stood a few moments at a time behind one or the other of the group, or dropped down on a bit of timber and listened, but they were there on sufferance only, for action claimed them before long, and they went on and left the oligarchy to itself. For with all its suggestion of the superannuated, it had its effect upon the mould of public opinion. The elders looked up at Captain Kellaway and nodded, half in greeting, half in assent.

"I guess," he went on, "that there's one or two black flags that Spain has got to haul down before things can go on just as they'd ought to, and if she don't want to," he added mildly, "I guess there ain't any way but to make

her." There was a moment of tacit agreement.

"There's a good deal of talk about our bein' a Christian nation," said the shopkeeper with diffidence, "and wantin' to keep the peace." He felt that it was an unpopular sentiment, but after all it was as well to cover all the ground.

"Well," growled the old sea-dog with the shaggy brows, "so long as we ain't Christian enough to let 'em get in the first broadside, I guess you and me need n't worry."

"Not so's to lay awake through the other man's watch," said his neighbor.

Steve had more to say now. Martial ardor unloosed his tongue, and his speech was not silvern, but all of cold steel.

The day after his return from the recruiting station, and three or four days after the declaration of war, Araby and her father met him at the dock as they were about to start on their morning trip. The color of the open sea was like nothing but a sapphire, there was a fresh breeze, and the air had action in it; the outlines of the headlands and of the buildings were so clear that they seemed actually to move forward from the background — to jump to the eyes; the sails, the water, the pennons, and the sunshine, all titillated with impulse. A man who looked like a painter's model sat on the edge of a cashiered dory and impartially watched them and some men who were bringing in fish. A sailor from one of the yachts, an alien, with an air of disinterestedness, was awaiting the ferry, not far off. Some girls who were sitting high up on the bank, almost over their heads, suddenly hushed their voices and laughter, and craned their heads over to hear what they were saying. But no one of the three lowered his voice for the listeners, and in truth the attention given them was most desultory — the model's eyes wandered to the fish even while they were speaking.

"So you're goin', Steve," called out the old man, as he pulled in his dory.

Steve paused in his work of calking the seams of a catboat and pushed back his straw hat.

"Yes, I'm going," he answered readily. Araby said nothing, but regarded him with a certain wide-eyed curiosity. She saw him in new relations, and it was as if his very appearance might have altered. For the moment he was less moved by the change than she. The sailor nodded.

"Young folks is all for goin'," he said without regret, as he climbed into the heavy rowboat, and Araby followed him. Then before she seated herself she turned and spoke.

"When are you coming back?" she asked.

"Coming back!" Steve's eyes fell on her with a scorn as of retreat.

"When they get into Havana, I guess," chuckled the former whaling captain.

"Yes, that's about it," Steve answered.

"You may never come back," said the girl suddenly.

"That's so, too," he assented soberly.

"Sho!" said Captain Kellaway, as they pulled out, after Steve had returned to his calking. "That ain't just what I'd ha' said to him."

Araby did not reply to this reflection on her tact. She had grown thoughtful, and her father, recognizing with entire acquiescence that aged men, though infinitely wise, were not always the chosen arbiters of the parting words of young men and maidens, withheld further emphasis of reproof.

"The Mildew ain't turned up again," he said as he lowered his sail for return. "She's been cruisin' quite a spell."

"Three weeks," said Araby.

"It's all of that," he replied. But that afternoon, through his spyglass, he saw her in the offing, and later in the day she steamed slowly in among the other craft, and dropped anchor in her accustomed place.

"That there's the Mildew," he said to his daughter, as he stood in front of his cottage looking out to sea. Araby came quickly to his side.

"So it is," she assented.

III.

The next morning the owner of the Mildew walked down through the twisting streets of the town toward its outskirts. He was chewing the cud of bitter fancy in the shape of an unlighted cigar, and was manifestly somewhat ill pleased by his mental environment. The little shops that jutted on to the rough brick pavement, the square houses with their hints of bygone roomy hospitality, now for the most part closed or metamorphosed for one or another public use, the cramped dwellings with their tiny gardens spilling over the weakly accommodating fences in profusion of brilliant color — he passed them all by, scarcely raising his eyes from the ground which he was covering with easy stride on his way to the old fort. When he reached it, with its barely to be distinguished bastions and intervallations, he sought a sunny corner out of the wind, stretched himself on the turf, and lighted his cigar. The water rippled in shaded moire antique under the strong blaze of the morning sun. The buildings on Wreck Island stood out with the pitiless accuracy of a parallelogram against the sky — the sky which was blue overhead but faded into a paler warmth upon the horizon. The island itself curved in gray barrenness above the blue of the sea with only a trifling verdancy of color clothing its slight elevation. To the left a smaller island, sparsely settled, blocked the view of the distant shore, its two lighthouses lifting themselves like the loftier monuments of an unpopulous graveyard. The old fort itself stretched its stiff bones basking in the sun, its grassy ramparts showing themselves

much less adequately defensive than the rocks piled in such unyielding jagged masses beyond them — masses which were warmed this morning into a flush that was almost pink. There was always more or less coming and going about the fort. Inactive seamen sauntered down there for a glance out to sea; lovers trysted there in solemn fashion, wandering about in the gleaming sunshine, in the aimlessness of absorption; fishermen came there to cast tentative lines off the rocks, and visitors, in pursuit of the picturesque. Carwood bestowed on none of them the meed even of transient observation. When, however, the slight buoyant figure of Araby Kellaway came around the rampart and paused before him a moment looking out to sea, although she did not perceive him, he was roused from his apathy.

"Why Araby!" he exclaimed, rising. "You here in the morning?" The girl started and turned toward him, disregarding the traces of tears on her flushed cheeks.

"I've been saying good-by to Steve," she said.

"Oh yes, Steve has gone to the war," he answered with a flash of recollection. "Lucky fellow!" he added, with a sigh.

"Why?" asked Araby.

If it had been Agatha Deering who asked, he would have offered the conventional explanation, more or less decked with novelty of phrase, that it was because she wept for his departure. As it was Araby, he answered as a man answers who is thinking his own variable thoughts.

"Because he is free to go."

"And are n't you?" inquired Araby, staying, with admirable composure, the course of a rolling tear that had not had time to dry.

"No, Araby, I am not," he replied with directness like her own. "I'm one of those who have to stay at home."

"It's mighty lucky some of you have got to stay at home," she said promptly.

It was homely consolation, but its genuineness made it grateful, and Carwood laughed.

"Thank you, Araby," he said. Araby looked at him in surprise.

"Well, I'm sure you're welcome," she said. Then she went back and seated herself on some heaped-up timber that had been left there, and had taken upon itself that weatherbeaten gray that is the gift of wind and storm.

"Steve did n't say much," she volunteered. Carwood taking his former seat on the ground felt that frankness of reference would not be amiss.

"Well, he's said it to you a good many times already, I suppose," he hazarded. Araby laughed.

"You don't know Steve," she declared. "He never says anything a good many times."

"Oh," said Carwood. He was regarding her with attention and thinking that, as Agatha had said, she was very pretty. How rapidly from a tousled child she had become a piquant young woman! He smoked dreamily as he fancied the pretty idyl—the boy, his eyes and ears filled with the panoply of war, not "saying much" but expressive notwithstanding; his sweetheart, with eyes full of the tragedy of parting, the waiting boat rocking on the sunlit waves.

"She was very pretty, was n't she?" said Araby suddenly.

Carwood opened his eyes in astonishment.

"She?" he repeated mechanically.

"Yes, the one on your boat when you were here last," explained Araby, with what might have been an elaborate carelessness, and might not.

"Oh, Miss Deering," he said, for he had remembered before she had spoken the second time. "Yes, she is very beautiful." Araby gazed at him with that undisguised keenness which gave her glance something of the curiosity of the child mingled with the shrewdness of a woman.

"I wondered," she went on with somewhat astonishing simplicity, "how much you liked her." Carwood laughed a little in spite of himself. It was impossible to resent anything from Araby's lips.

"I'm afraid she does n't, Araby," he said lightly. "I don't think she has any curiosity about it at all."

"Oh yes, she has," said Araby sagely. "That's just what she has got. Those are the things she likes to know." Carwood threw away his half-smoked cigar.

"Araby the Blest!" he ejaculated. "How do you know?"

"Oh, I know," she assured him. "I see a lot of people first and last."

"That's true," he assented. "But," he concluded half to himself, "certainly you have intuitions." Then he mused a few moments on that which defies analysis.

"But," resumed Araby ingenuously, "I was n't wondering about her."

"But I was," interpolated Carwood. "I beg your pardon—go on."

"I was wondering about you."

Something in the frankness of her eyes brought Carwood to a mental standstill, like the jerk of a rein. A single sailboat swooped down within the charmed limits of the stretch of sea between the islands and the fort. An old man,—Captain Apelby,—active if heavy, pulled his dory sturdily by, close to the rocks, with short, strong strokes, effective if not spectacular. It was a world of clearness, the patent and the undisguised—the mystery and the ambiguous were waiting for the sea when the sun should set. Before Captain Apelby had pulled four strokes, Carwood told himself he was a fool—whatever was in Araby's eyes, it was not confession. He wondered vaguely what had become of Steve—he seemed to have dropped out of the conversation rather unaccountably.

"She is much the more interesting

of the two, Araby," he said, not without an effort, "because she is hard to understand."

Araby had employed the pause in making a spyglass out of her two hands, and observing through it the manœuvres of the sailboat.

"You're not so awful easy," she said. For the life of him, he could not make out if she were simply following the dictates of her ample curiosity, to which nothing human was foreign, or if there were a persistent personal emotion driving her on.

"Nor you," he said impulsively.

"Oh, me!" she replied indifferently. "But I think you would like me better if I were." From piquant, her frankness had become tantalizing, and Carwood forgot to speculate about Miss Deering. "That is one thing about you I've noticed," she went on, "you and a lot of other people that come to the harbor — you like best what you don't quite understand. Now I like what I can see right through."

"You like fresh water better than salt?" he queried half absently, half laughing.

"Well," she assented seriously, "I don't know but what I do." It was odd how near it came to what Agatha Deering had said about her. The fact that education has not much to do with the apprehension of cause and effect struck Carwood like an illumination. With it came another thing that was in part the result of his dissatisfaction in a subtler experience, in part the effect of the brilliant day and the girl's vivid beauty and a simplicity which was crystalline but not insipid. He dropped his head in his hands a moment. Oh, the refreshment of a cup of cold water! When he raised his head again Araby was observing him with something approaching anxiety.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked.

"No, Araby the Blest," he laughed, half at himself, half at life, "nothing is

the matter except that I seem to be falling in love with you."

"Oh, my!" said Araby the Blest.

IV.

"Oh, my!" was practically what she continued to say, since Carwood found what might have been the caprice of a summer morning developing into a persistent purpose. It was not difficult for him to perceive in the swift appeal of the clear and the primitive a settled reaction toward all that was finest and most satisfying. If Araby's simplicity had been stupidity, none would have wearied of it more readily than he. But she was wonderfully quick and perceptive, and the habit of her life, so distinctly social, had given her an unaffected ease of manner which lightly adjusted itself to circumstances, and in which many of more conventional but less varied opportunities are often noticeably deficient. And why, in short, should he not marry her? She was beautiful, charming, and adaptable, and, as he told himself more than once, he had no one he must please but himself in this matter of marrying.

"The Mildew sets in the harbor most all of the time now, don't she?" remarked Mr. Tippett one morning when the gray of the water was slashed with white and the boats rocked ominously.

"Yes, she'll be getting barnacles on her keel if her skipper don't look out," jested Captain Apelby somewhat heavily.

"He's lookin' out," said Hanson briefly.

"It's a kind of pity Steve is busy bayoneting them Dagos," ruminated Tippett.

"He is n't bayoneting any Dagos," said Apelby scornfully. "He's lyin' in a camp ten feet of mud by sixteen of chills and fever, while his officers are singin' 'Old Glory.'" Captain Apelby

was chronically opposed to the administration of public affairs, and occasionally sacrificed precision to picturesqueness.

"He'll get fever himself," said Hanson gloomily, while his keen, aged eyes watched the *Cartsing* masts and the tossing waves upon which blew the free winds of heaven.

"He wants to get it quick," said Captain Apelby, epigrammatic still, "unless he wants somebody else to get Araby."

"I don't know as that would help," said Mr. Tippett, blinking slowly his milder orbs.

"It'd bring him home," rejoined Hanson.

"There's Kellaway now!" exclaimed Captain Apelby, as the water boat with its clumsy lines and blue sail, careening riskily, went out toward the mouth of the harbor.

"The *Irma's* layin' way out, is n't she?" commented Tippett. "I guess she's short of water. There's Araby in the bow."

"And Cap'n Carwood," added Hanson, while all the grizzled heads turned in the same direction. "Gosh!" he concluded definitely, after due meditation, "I don't believe he can tell the water boat from the *Mildew* these days." A dry restricted smile went about the circle — a smile neither anxious nor satirical. Affairs of sentiment held their true place in the alembic of these minds, that of the temporary, fleeting, and not infrequent.

Carwood was himself not insensible to the amusement of the situation, when as now he carried on his wooing under the eyes of Captain Kellaway. It was, it must be admitted, a desultory wooing, rendered so as much by the insouciance of the lady as by the holiday humor of the knight. "You know I really am very much in love with you, Araby," he said now and then, "and you really have got to take it seriously some time." And Araby would respond, "Yes, I

guess you are," with a nod of perfect apprehension, and an absence of deduction which was disconcerting. As for Captain Kellaway, he had grown old with an entire indifference to so-called social distinctions, and he was not going to trouble himself because Araby had another admirer. She had already shown herself capable of all necessary finesse in similar relations. Once in a while Araby gave the matter her attention. Then Carwood would find her looking at him with meditative speculation.

"What is it, Araby?" he would ask.

"I was thinking," she would reply with readiness.

"Yes, but about what?" he persisted, this morning.

"I was wondering if you ever knew what you wanted," she said. "It's going to be a blow, father," she called out, almost in the same breath, to the old man at the tiller. He glanced at the sullen aspect of the heavens and the sea.

"It's blowing now somewhere not far off," he assented.

"What I want?" exclaimed Carwood. "The question is what you want or do not want."

"That is n't so mighty important," she answered imperturbably. Carwood turned up the collar of the cape she wore to protect her against the flying spray. His touch was a caress, but she did not flush under it; instead, she looked up into his face and laughed.

"Araby," he said, "I wish I could tell whether you are very simple or only awesomely complex."

"I'm simple enough for two," she replied. "There's the *Nellie M.*, father," she called out again to the skipper, whose machinery responded to the little twist and caused him to look off to the right.

"True's you live," he answered with all the mildness compatible with the wind in his teeth. The *Nellie M.* was an awkward freight steamer, which went

up and down on errands between Boston and the harbor, with appearances and disappearances unfixed by any schedule.

"She'll get in just in time to avoid the blow, won't she, captain?" said Carwood absently.

"If she wants to," said the captain. "She's goin' to come between us and the Irma as it is," he added, as he moved the tiller.

"Why she's signaling to us," said Araby; "she must want water. Put about, father."

"A pretty time to be wantin' water," muttered the sailor. "She's goin' right into harbor. I never had any use for victualin' in the open." But accustomed to the heed of such signals, he made ready to alter the boat's course.

"You'll tip us over, father," warned Araby suddenly.

Carwood had time to glance at her in surprise — she was usually so free from apprehensiveness! — while her father spoke.

"Can't tip over this old flat-bottomed man-of-war" — There was a swift rattle, a dizzying lurch, and the captain interrupted himself with an exclamation not strictly nautical in its character, as the flat-bottomed man-of-war tipped over.

Fortunately none of them were injured or involved in the timber or cordage of the upset, and a ducking more or less meant little to any one of them. But even for expert swimmers, clinging to an upturned boat is susceptible of ennuï, and it was with a distinct sensation of relief that Carwood saw a boat put off at once from the Nellie M. to their assistance.

"It ain't the first time there's been an upset because folks was too plumb sartain," was the only comment Kellaway permitted himself in return for the chaff which assailed him on his seamanship from the crew of the relief boat, all acquaintances, if not friends, of Kellaway and his daughter.

"What made you so anxious all at

once for a drink of water?" demanded Araby, with some irritation, of her rescuers. "Could n't you have waited till you got in? 'Twas all your fault." She expected a reply in kind, but instead, the men at the oars grew sober, and glanced at one another uneasily, and then at her, where she sat wrapped in a reefer sent by friendly hands. It was not cold, and her hair was already beginning to dry in the wind. It was as if she had shaken herself like a water spaniel and were none the worse. Carwood, who was dripping but not dismayed, saw her quick eyes searching the men's countenances, and he scanned them too.

"Well, we've got a sick man on board," said one of them, as he drew breath after a sturdy stroke.

"And have n't you any water at all?" asked Carwood.

"Yes," answered the other oarsman, shamefacedly, "we've got water enough."

There was a pause in which the men again glanced sidewise at one another.

"Well?" said Araby imperiously.

"Well — you see he's been askin' for a drink of water right along now for a spell," replied the man obediently, though with hesitation, "but he would have it — well, he wanted it, right — out of the water boat — nothin' else would do, — he's kinder out of his head, you see, — and seein' you so near, and him wantin' it so powerful bad, the doctor he allowed that" — The speaker's eloquence broke down finally, and he turned appealingly to his mate. But Araby was the first to speak.

"You've got Steve aboard," she said calmly.

"That's it," said the man with the joy of a lifted responsibility.

"Steve!" exclaimed Carwood. "And ill!"

"Well," said their informant cautiously, "the doctor allowed he would n't get any better unless they got him where he was bound to go, so we fetched him

along of us ;" and they shipped oars by the side of the *Nellie M.*

It scarcely needed the helping hands to swing the girl to the low deck of the freight boat.

"Give me the cup, father," she called down. For once Captain Kellaway found his daughter quite impracticable. The mild eyes shone with a brief vexation.

"The cup!" he exclaimed ; and then not trusting himself to anything but unadorned statement, "The codfish has got it," he affirmed. It was Carwood who found a cup and filled it for her with the fresh water some one offered him. Kellaway's indignation lapsed at once, and, temporarily subdued into a rare self-distrust, he looked dumbly on. Then they watched her go forward to where, on a mattress, lay the wreck of the handsome boy who had gone forth with the glorious dreams of youth into a conflict other than that which they had portrayed, and whose return was so close to the weariness of defeat. Hollow-eyed, pitifully weak, feverishly restless, he barely lifted his eyelids as the girl knelt beside him, and slipped her arm under his head.

"Here I am, Steve," said Araby, "let me give you a drink of water."

The boy's eyes opened wider with something like a flash of gratitude, and fixed themselves on her smiling face, with a shadow of the old, dumb look of devotion, and, silent still, he drank eagerly.

V.

A week later, Carwood stood alone on the deck of his yacht. Every now and then, through the stillness of the dusk, drifted words of greeting or farewell, called out into the night from the doorways of club or cottage across the harbor, and bursts of laughter from the cabin close at hand, in which a party of his guests were sitting about a card table, and from which he had escaped a few

moments ago into this silence of undulating waters, ghostly forms of scattered boats, and undeviating starlight. Leaning on the rail he looked over to the grass-grown heights where he had met Araby that morning.

"Araby," he had said, "you are going to marry Steve, are you not?"

Araby shook her hair out of her eyes.

"Yes," she said, "I suppose I am. Though," and she paused to laugh, "Steve has n't said much about it yet."

Carwood had been conscious of a pettish rebellion against a fate which seemed determined to be weakly injurious, but it did not pass into an outbreak.

"And what about me?" he demanded, not unreasonably. "Don't you know I'm in love with you too?"

Araby regarded him with frank readiness.

"Well," she said, "you see Steve—Steve wants just what I can give. And you—well, you want a good deal more." There was neither reserve nor bitterness in her explanation.

"And you—what about you?" He could not help the question, though he might not have defended its taste.

"Oh, I?—if I know what folks want, I'm glad to give it to them," and her eyes gleamed with laughter as she waved her hand to him and went on. For the hundredth time he was trying to-night to decide if it were by her very simplicity that she puzzled him so. One of his men came forward and gave him the mail just brought over from the mainland. He took it nearer the light and saw that one of the letters was from Agatha Deering, and bore the New York postmark. She had returned, then, from England, and had written to him almost at once. He thought he knew about what she would say and how she would say it, this enigmatic young woman. She was more compelling than Araby, but, after all, she puzzled him less. He could at least understand that she was by no means always sure that she understood herself.

Her elusivenesses were more intelligible than Araby's franknesses. Have we lost our grasp of the simple in our efforts to realize the complex, he asked himself, as he glanced again at the smooth characteristic handwriting on the envelope. He was conscious of a sense of pleasure so keen that it was excitement as he noted its well-known delicate angles. As he was about to break the seal, one of his guests, young Morrow, came to the door and sang out: —

“ Where are you, Carwood? ”

“ Here, ” answered his host, putting the letter in his pocket.

“ Come in and attend to your guests, ” commanded Morrow. “ Would you buy us off with meat and drink, while you consort with our betters? Come in and change the luck! ”

“ I am ~~sw~~ning, ” laughed Carwood, lighting a fresh cigar, and together they entered the bright cabin.

“ Oh, here you are at last, Carwood, ” said an older man, glancing up at him with some attention, as with a glass of wine at his elbow he dealt the cards. “ Chilly outside, eh? Sensible boy, to come in. What is cold water to champagne! ”

Annie Eliot Trumbull.
